



**Southeastern**  
Baptist Theological Seminary

**PhD in Pastoral Theology Entrance Exam Study Guide**

The entrance exam for the Ph. D. in Pastoral Theology will consist of essay questions in two parts, each part approximately three hours in length.

The essay questions will be chosen from the list below. The bulk of the preparation for answering these questions should have taken place in the student's M.Div. studies, but a number of books are listed below to help students review and fill in some gaps.

Applicants are expected to be prepared to write for 90 minutes on any of the following questions. Essays will be assessed according to the following criteria:

**Relevance and Argumentation**

- Students should give careful attention to the question and outline refined arguments. Student should incorporate & critically interact with relevant resources related to the field.

**Writing Mechanics**

- Students' responses should be intelligent, and precise. Reasonable arrangement of paragraphs and ideas should enhance a reader's understanding. Responses should be focused, and vocabulary varied. Responses should contain very few grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

**Awareness of Relevant Scholarship**

- Students should show awareness of seminal sources, major figures and pivotal events related to the field and incorporate and properly interact with resources related to the question.

## Reading List:

- Akin, Daniel L. and R. Scott Pace. *Pastoral Theology: Theological Foundations for Who a Pastor Is and What He Does*. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017.
- Billings, Todd. *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011
- Chappell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.
- Hammett, John. *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2019.
- Hiestand, Gerald. *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
- Irving, Justin and Mark Strauss. *Leadership in Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.
- Lane, Timothy and Paul David Tripp. *How People Change*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008.
- Laniak, Timothy. *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.
- Oden, Thomas. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 1983.
- Purves, Andrew. *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Senkbell, Harold. *The Care of the Souls: Cultivating of Pastor's Heart*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019.

## Questions:

1. Develop an essay that traces the biblical imaginary of shepherding in the Old and New Testaments relative to the office of pastor in the NT.
2. Define the discipline of Pastoral Theology. Be sure to provide a discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your definition in relation to other definitions. Also, establish clearly the biblical, theological, and pastoral basis for your definition.

3. Describe the role of the pastor of a local church, giving particular attention to the pastor's calling, qualifications, and responsibilities.
4. Relative to a biblical theology of sin and suffering, discuss how each should be understood and would affect your assessment and counsel of a person with a major mental disorder.
5. Discuss the doctrine of salvation, focusing on the following aspects: union with Christ, justification, and sanctification.
6. Articulate an evangelical doctrine of revelation (both special and general), then explain why and how this impacts one's pastoral theology.
7. In view of the mission of God and the role of the church, locate biblical counseling on the mental health map. Provide essential biblical texts that justify your perspective.
8. State and defend your perspective on divorce and remarriage. In view of your ecclesiology, discuss how this would impact your role and counsel when separation and/or divorce are an issue for a couple you are working with as a pastor.
9. According to Chapell in *Christ-Centered Preaching*, how can you determine the redemptive purpose of the sermon? What are the distinguishing marks of redemptive or grace-driven preaching? How does an understanding of biblical theology help the preacher develop redemptive sermons?
10. Biblically and theologically define "Christian leadership." Be certain to explain what makes leadership distinctly "Christian."

11. Construct a biblical ecclesiology. Comment specifically on the nature, marks, ministries, polity and ordinances of the church, noting ecclesiological issues where Baptists have distinctive views. What issues have particular importance for the theology and practice of Baptist churches today?
  
12. Elaborate on the importance of the leader's character within both secular and Christian leadership. In addition, give attention to the relationship between "character" and "competency" in a Christian leader.